

Dear Member,

East Coker Parish Council understands that the Project Management Board is to meet soon to discuss the Core Strategy and decide the recommendations that will be put before the relevant councils and committees. However, East Coker Parish Council is not satisfied that the flaws in the documents forming the evidence base for the Core Strategy have been addressed and corrected, in particular those concerning the location for an urban extension of Yeovil, many of which have been pointed out in recent years by East Coker Parish Council. East Coker Parish Council is therefore concerned that conclusions and recommendations will not be based upon well sourced, accurate and grounded evidence. East Coker Parish Council would therefore, once more, like to summarise the flaws and inaccuracies in the supporting documents which have not been adequately corrected.

Eco Sustainability

An urban extension to the south of Yeovil would not be sustainable if designed to full Eco specifications. The employment land provided within the urban extension will not provide jobs for everyone living in the urban extension (and for monetary reasons houses are always developed before employment land anyway). Much of the population of a new urban extension will be dependent upon Yeovil and other nearby settlements for employment. For only 50% of car journeys to be made by public transport there will need to be adequate provision of public transport and the possibility of walking and cycling. The following reasons (which have all been pointed out before) are proof that a southern urban extension built to these full eco criteria would not be sustainable:

- **The Southern Escarpment:** East Coker Parish council is aware that numerous documents refer to the presence of relatively flat land between the south of Yeovil and the town centre. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Escarpment responsible for Hendford Hill, Forest Hill, Bunford Hollow is undoubtedly steep and of significant distance so as to be prohibitive to walking or cycling for the majority of people. The scale of this escarpment can be seen by studying the contour lines on any map and is undoubtedly the steepest of all the escarpments surrounding Yeovil. This encourages the use of private transport going against a key objective of the Draft Core Strategy.
- **Bus Routes:** It is only sensible for the location of an urban extension should be driven by current bus routes. The area to the north of Yeovil is far better served by existing routes than to the south, and this looks set to continue in the cuts to services that SCC currently propose and out for public consultation are to be adopted.
- **Grade 1 Agricultural Land:** The Keyfod area and much of the land to the South of Yeovil is Grade 1 Agricultural land, a prime resource that should be treasured and kept for necessary production and as a resource for future generations. The definition for "sustainable development" within the draft NPPF is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Development on Grade 1 Agricultural land to create an Eco settlement when other sites are available is therefore clearly not "sustainable development" and is an irreversible contradiction.

- **Misnomas:** Two frequently read but factually inaccurate statements are as follows: **That the Keyford site has the flattest terrain of all the potential sites** when the area to the North West of Yeovil has exactly the same number of contour lines within it at a virtually identical spacing to the Keyford site. **That a southern location would be necessary for eco design and passive solar gain.** When these are both dependent upon good design but can be located on any of the land surrounding Yeovil. Foundry House, designed to full eco specifications is at the base of the steep north facing slope of Summer House Hill.

Sustainability

There are further reasons why any urban extension to the south of Yeovil would not be the most appropriate or sustainable location:

- **Heritage:** East Coker Parish Council is concerned with the reference of more important Heritage sites in the North West than in the Southern option. This is patently wrong and East Coker Parish Council would like to draw attention to this fact so that this error is not perpetuated. The area to the south of Yeovil (East Coker, West Coker...) is riddled with listed buildings and conservation areas. East Coker itself is home to three Grade 1 Listed buildings and Roman Villas which are situated within the proposed development area at Keyford.
- **Infrastructure:** The road infrastructure to the south of Yeovil and linking to the A303 is insufficient to support the flow of extra traffic from any urban extension without significant upgrade involving prohibitive cost. The recent Highway Infrastructure Report (November 2011) does not provide enough infrastructure to allow traffic from an urban extension to the south of Yeovil to flow. Queueing and pollution would entail from the proposals suggested and costed in this report, going against key criteria of the Core Strategy.
- **Flooding:** There is already a significant flooding risk to the south of Keyford following rainfall with flooding already occurring regularly in the winter. This would be exaggerated by development. These naturally occurring events are expensive and difficult to mitigate against.
- **Health and Well Being:** It is felt that insufficient emphasis has been placed upon value of the sandy lanes in East Coker Parish both as a means of all enjoying the countryside and of the associated health benefits of fresh air and walking.